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**Mustafa al-'ARIS and his Companions
before the Court of Justice**

Mustafa al-'ARIS and his companions, accused of organizing a demonstration and fomenting trouble in front of the UNESCO palace, appeared for the second time, yesterday morning, before the Court of Justice.

The thirty accused persons, their fifteen defenders, the relatives of some and the friends of others largely filled the courtroom.

President ITANI, surrounded by Presidents Hasan QABALAN, Badir MAYUSHI, Emile YANNI and Kamal MAZHIR, proceeded to interrogate the witness, Policeman KARA, which infuriated some of the accused.

Mr. Raji RAHI, representing the Public Prosecutor, was then permitted to speak. Mr. RAHI commenced by making a distinction between liberty and anarchy and accused those who demonstrated before UNESCO center of having forgotten this distinction. The Attorney General accused Mustafa ARIS, who is said to have been the promoter of the demonstration and its virtual creator. Mr. RAHI said that the moral damage suffered by Lebanon on that occasion was inestimable, and that the causes of this damage should be severely punished.

The defense lawyers, one after the other, then began to plead their respective client's cases.

After Salim 'AQL, who knows how to be brief and concise, Mr. Yusuf GERMANOS, who represented 'ARIS, declared that the Attorney General's arguments were reduced to zero plus zero equals zero.

This little calculation was followed by a definition of the true aspect of Lebanon which -- Arab or Phoenician -- remains the country of freedom. GERMANOS defended his client's convictions and finished by demanding his acquittal.

After a rather long recess, the spectators returned to an atmosphere charged with electricity.

Mr. Alfred ABU-SHAHLAH, who defended two Iraqi students arrested among the demonstrators, was followed by Mr. ARATIMOS who represented Nasib NIMR, professor and journalist. Mr. ARATIMOS gave a long and brilliant judicial discussion of Articles 317, 345 and 346 of the Penal Code which incriminated the accused and ended his plea with a lyrical flight on Lebanon and liberty.

Mr. Mustafa MURAD, former Ba'lbek detainee, taking up an idea dear to Victor AWWAD, was astonished to see his honorable clients being judged in a box where it would be most logical to see the Dandasha.

Transported by his own pleading and the remembrance of "seven months without trial in a concentration camp," Mr. MURAD ended by declaring that the Government "plotted" against Mustafa al-'ARIS. This word caused an explosion. The representative of the Public Prosecutor jumped up and asked the defense lawyer to retract his statement. The other lawyers immediately came to the support of their colleague. Mr. Raji RAHI insisted that the lawyer withdraw the word "plotted."

Protests sounded from all sides.

President ITANI recalled to the defense lawyer "that he was pleading the case of his clients before the High Court, not his own case before the public." The Attorney General confirmed this statement by affirming that "we are not at the forum." But Mr. MURAD does not have much faith in the respect for liberty in Lebanon and he firmly reiterated his beliefs. President ITANI, beside himself, arose and threatened to adjourn the hearing if the lawyer did not change his tone. But the latter was not disposed to do this and President ITANI prevented him from continuing his plea. Mr. MURAD sat down and sulked.

The President: What do you ask for your clients.

The Lawyer: I do not ask for anything more.

Mr. MURAD finished, however, by asking that the indictment be thrown out.

Mr. Nasib MIKHAYL succeeded him and quoted articles of the Lebanese Constitution guaranteeing freedom. He was carried on to cite the questions of Indonesia, China and Chiang Kai-Shek.

President ITANI assumed a persuasive and benevolent air, "Turn the page, Sir."

Mr. MIKHAYL complied and actually skipped over a whole passage of his speech. He then came to "the liberties scoffed at in Lebanon."

The President jumped up and repeated his advice, "Turn the page again."

After having thus "turned several pages," Mr. MIKHAYL finished by asking for an acquittal of his client, Latif BAZZI.

The speech of Mr. Hasib NIMR was strong, long and rich in repetition and was the occasion of many new incidents. Mr. NIMR is convinced that the reddish color of his clients is the principal cause of their troubles. The President wanted to persuade him to the contrary. "The convictions of the accused do not interest us."

Mr. NIMR did not lessen his plea for the Communist cause. The President again threatened to adjourn the hearing. The posters carried by the accused regarding certain imperialism were again the cause of a new rapping for order.

The atmosphere became more tense. The defense lawyers who succeeded NIMR were more moderate. One of these, however, Mr. HURAYKI, had violent arguments with the President and the Attorney General.

The speakers finished and the President sighed. But his troubles had not ended. The accused were permitted to speak, and they made good use of the opportunity.

Mustafa al-'ARIS stated that he was a "lawyer without a license." He is not the only one. 'ARIS, his throat tight with emotion, eloquently recounted his struggles and sufferings since 1924. He then gave an account of his arrest before the UNESCO center and denied having taken the slightest part in the demonstration, which, he adds, he "keenly" regrets.

He was immediately applauded. The President became angry.

The other accused spoke in turn demanding their acquittal or simple justice from the court.

Hasib NIMR, the journalist, asked permission to quote SOLON. The President, alarmed, said, "Who"? "SOLOD"? "WHY"? "NO POLITICS!"

The accused said that it was a question of SOLON, a Greek sage.

The Greek sage in question calmed the tempers, but not for long.

The incidents, the President's interruptions, the protests of the Public Prosecutor, and the defense, are said to have continued until the end of the session at 3:30 PM.

The judgment will be rendered on next Wednesday (2 February) at one o'clock.

L'Orient

30 January 1949

In Favor of Iraqi Syndicalists

A delegation representing the Womens' Democratic movement and other Lebanese womens' organizations visited the Iraqi Legation to protest against the renewal of the trial in Baghdad of the Iraqi unionists.

L'Orient
27 January 1949

New Lebanese Identity Card

The Civil Services of the country are studying a plan for a new identity card, submitted by a Lebanese.

To avoid falsification of the cards, the author of the plan suggests that the photo of the holder be made an integral part of the card.

Until now, the photos have been simply pasted on to the cards, and could be replaced by other photos.

L'Orient
27 January 1949

Prague Fair

The Prague Fair of the Fall of 1948 gave an accurate picture of the efforts accomplished in Czechoslovakia at a time when the biennial reconstruction plan was about to be terminated.

The quinquennial plan begins with the new year, and the Spring Fair of 13 to 20 March will reflect the course that Czechoslovakian industry will follow in the next five years.

The Prague Fair enjoys world renown because of the variety of goods displayed. In this respect, it must be added that the Czechoslovak Government encourages everything which can promote greater commerce with all countries, without exception.

The administration of the Fair is doing everything possible to make things easy for visitors, and one may justly affirm that the journey to Prague presents no particular difficulties. Visitors can obtain free Czechoslovak visas without needless formalities. They may travel freely throughout Czechoslovakia and also visit the factories.

Since its foundation in 1920, this will be the forty-ninth Prague Fair. Judging from the past, the Spring Fair of 1949 is destined to be a great commercial and industrial success.

Le Hour
27 January 1949